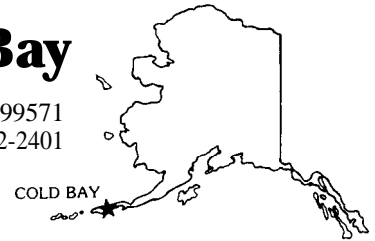


City of Cold Bay

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Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
3 132 Channel Drive, Room 200
Juneau, AK 99801-7898

March 25, 2002

Comments from Cold Bay regarding the:

Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan dated February, 2002 with comment period ending March 25, 2002.

1. Page 2-7 King Cove - Cold Bay Connection

as reads:

"This plan recognizes the need for a viable and practical surface transportation link between the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay, and endorses the findings of the King Cove-Cold Bay Facilities Concept Report and Assessment of Transportation Need (DOT&PF, 1999). It supports further efforts by both communities to refine and implement a near-term, workable transportation solution. 1

Although this is the desire of the residents of King Cove, a viable and practical surface transportation link by land is not possible between the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay for several reasons.

First, in releasing funds for the King Cove Cold Bay transportation access - Senator Stevens support for a link outlined as a project calling for "a safe and reliable alternative transportation" to a road system linking the two communities. A study is being conducted by the Aleutians East Borough for this alternative method of transportation. The City of Cold Bay prepared a resolution supporting a ferry link between the two communities. The community of King Cove is pushing for a hovercraft link which would be comprised of about 17 miles of road through their land to a terminus across from Trout Creek on the Cold Bay side. This is what they want to do. **In** Cold Bay we believe that a ferry system linking the two communities would be most logical solution to the safe and reliable transportation access link between our communities.

Second, the Federal Government will not allow a road to be cut through the Wilderness area. By allowing a road across a federally designated wilderness area, a precedent for all wilderness areas could be set.

Thirdly, if a road was to be constructed its maintenance and upkeep would be too great for the locals to bear.

POPULATION

On Pages 4-7 you discuss population growth in the Southwest Alaska region. The

population as of the 2000 census shows our region to hold 30,078 residents. The forecast for the year 2020 is estimated to be 37,000 in this region with only a 23 person increase for the Aleutians East Borough. On table 2, page 5 you show Cold Bay with 88 residents for 2000 and project a loss to 60 residents by 2020. We believe that Dr. Scott Goldsmith of UAF's Institute for Social and Economic Research could not have taken the following factors into consideration on Cold Bay's potential growth in the Aleutians East Borough. The City of Cold Bay anticipates growing by at least 20 by the year 2020 based on the following facts:

1. Cold Bay is the only non-fishing community in a fishing based economy for its Borough. With the shortened fishing seasons and popularity of farmed salmon, we are the community more likely to maintain a healthy population while the other communities could see a decline in population.
2. Cold Bay has maintained 100% employment for several years. All adults who want to work in this community do work. The major employers include: US Government (FAA, FSS, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, State and local governments, plus several local entrepreneurs. These governmental positions tend to remain stable despite the local economy.
3. Izembek National Wildlife Refuge is currently working to enlarge their staff to accommodate an anticipated increase in visitors to this large and accessible wildlife refuge. Izembek National Wildlife Refuge hosts the second largest eelgrass beds in the world and is a natural stopover for several species of migratory birds. The eelgrass beds support the entire population of the Pacific Black Brant.
4. The ADOT/PF airport manager continues to upgrade state equipment and training as this state office provides vital service to several major airlines utilizing the Cold Bay runway as an emergency alternate airfield.
5. As part of our over all economic development, we are beginning to receive cruise ships who wish to use our port and our airport to exchange crews and passengers. As this economic development opportunity begins to unfold we see a need for additional workers in the private sector in Cold Bay
6. Cold Bay is the transportation hub for the Southern Alaska Peninsula and the Eastern Aleutian Islands. Access to Nelson Lagoon, False Pass, and King Cove is through Cold Bay.
7. Izembek NWR is making major preparations to accommodate tourists from the monthly ferry system. These preparations include a longer layover in Cold Bay to provide natural interpretations, preparing for tour routes of the local refuge, interpretative signs, and are looking into the purchase of a van or bus.

Proposed Plan Elements

page 20

Proposed AMHS Service Improvements

as reads:

" Substantial federal funding has been provided for a surface transportation link between King Cove and Cold Bay. Once this surface link is in place, it is thought to be unnecessary for the Tustumena to call at both King Cove and Cold Bay. Accordingly, it is assumed that the Tustumena will call only at King Cove. I*

Currently, the number one option the Aleutians East Borough is looking at a hovercraft link for transportation between King Cove and Cold Bay is 17 miles from King Cove across Cold Bay to the mouth of Trout Creek on the City of Cold Bay side.

The Cold Bay ADOT/PF sends Dump Truck loads of sand and gravel to the various communities for airport maintenance and such. Without the ferry system, this link will be lost as the hovercraft may not be able to accommodate their equipment.

The Corps of Engineers, the Air Force and the Army have been working hard at cleaning up the contaminated area left after WWII and the subsequent military presence in the area. At various times since WWII there have been between 40,000 to 60,000 troops and sailors stationed in the Cold Bay vicinity. The contractors are dependent upon the ferry system to bring in the heavy equipment and the temporary office buildings they use during the cleanups.

Each year, avid bird watchers/tourists utilize the ferry system to observe the wide variety of birds and other wildlife in this region of the Alaska Peninsula. For the last few years, the City of Cold Bay, Izembek NWR, and the naturalist on the ferry system have been working together to provide these tourists an opportunity to maximize their viewing. This opportunity would be lost if the Alaska Maritime Highway System bypassed Cold Bay.

Again, **the City of Cold Bay believes eliminating the monthly Alaska Maritime Highway System stop into Cold Bay is not a feasible option anytime in the future.**

FOR THE CITY OF COLD BAY COUNCIL:



Steve Hicks

City Clerk/Treasurer